

JAPAN CHRISTIAN ACTIVITY NEWS

Chairman
Tsunetaro Miyakoda

*Published by the Commission on Public Relations
of the National Christian Council of Japan*

Editors:
Kaname Tsukahara
(Mrs.) Mary W. Meynardie

CABLE CODE: JAPACONCIL, ADDRESS: CHRISTIAN CENTER, 24-CHOME GINZA, TOKYO, JAPAN

Subscription Rates: Japan ¥700; Foreign (Sea mail) \$2.00; (Air mail) \$3.50.

No. 140

February 17, 1959

| <u>In These Pages</u> | <u>Page</u> |
|--|-------------|
| Christian Federation Discusses Ise Shrine Problem. | 1 |
| Stanley Jones Campaign Has New Impact. | 2 |
| Youth Department Holds Annual Leaders Conference | 2 |
| National Christian Council Convention Next Month | 3 |
| Christian Diet Member Passes | 3 |
| Tokyo Professor Earns Doctor's Degree. | 4 |
| Fukuoka Gets New Christian Broadcast | 4 |
| Korean Church Grows in Japan | 4 |
| Tape-Recordings for The Blind. | 4 |
| Braille Bibles for The Blind | 4 |
| Fletcher Wins The Schweitzer Award | 5 |
| Centennial Visitors | 5 |
| Centennial Evangelism. | 5 |

CHRISTIAN FEDERATION DISCUSSES ISE SHRINE PROBLEM

On February 12 representatives from 20 denominations (including Roman Catholic members) met together in the Christian Federation of Japan to discuss the problem of the Ise Shrine and its classification under the present Constitution of Japan. Present also was Dr. Zenta Watanabe, advisor to the government on Christian religion and formerly a professor of theology at Aoyama Gakuin.

The delegates decided to study this issue more carefully and particularly the thinking of the government in regard to it. Some of the member groups went on record as saying that it was not proper to remove the Ise Shrine Sect from the list of religions and it would be a mistake to place it under the protection of the government. Others said it will become a great obstacle to Christian work in Japan.

Some background knowledge is needed to the understanding of this growing nation-wide debate. Under Article 20 of the Constitution no religion can have the protection of the government. Before the war, the Ise Shrine was not considered a religion and therefore pilgrimages and homage was due of all Japanese nationals. Since the war it has officially been declared a Sect of the Shinto religion and therefore is not entitled to protection and support from the government.

However, the ultra-nationalists are at work in Japan now to have this Ise Shrine removed from the list of religions so that it can again enjoy the protection and support of the government. Actually it is the Imperial family religion and is the center of royal family worship. In the pre-war period even Christians were obliged to go there because it was supposed to be the center of the nationalist spirit and not of a partisan sect.

Because most Prime Ministers have made their pilgrimages publicly to the Ise Shrine even in the post-war period, the meaning of these trips has become subject to question and has become a delicate problem.

The United Church of Christ Social Problem Committee has decided definitely that the Ise Shrine must be kept on a par with other religions in Japan and not in a position where it can benefit from special privilege, protection and support of the government.

The NCC will discuss this at its forthcoming meeting on March 10 and 11.

STANLEY JONES CAMPAIGN HAS NEW IMPACT

Arriving in Japan on February 4 the present E. Stanley Jones evangelistic team began its work with mass meetings in Tokyo and Yokosuka and then went into their first Ashram here at Amagi-Sanso with 250 people there for three days. The mass meeting were packed to capacity and the variation in the membership of the team has proved a great boon in the present campaign.

Under the leadership of Dr. Thomas Carruth, of the Methodist Prayer Life Movement in the States, the beginnings of a new and vital movement in the Japan church can already be felt. This prayer life movement has already begun in some of the Tokyo Churches and one leader in the NCC remarked, "We are expecting all of Japan will organize special prayer groups."

The team consisting of Dr. E. Stanley Jones, its leader, Dr. Carruth, and Mrs. Mary Webster, lay evangelist, is now at work in the Osaka area and in other parts of southern Japan. The full itinerary was published in the previous edition of this paper.

Dr. Abdul Haqq, educator and evangelist of India, who was originally scheduled to be with the team throughout the campaign had to return to his family in India suddenly and is not able to complete the tour.

YOUTH DEPARTMENT HOLDS ANNUAL LEADERS CONFERENCE

The Annual Strategy Conference of Youth Leaders sponsored by the National Christian Council Youth Department met at Izu Nagaoka on the Izu Peninsula from February 3--5.

Thirty-eight leaders of youth representing the many denominations came together to study the theme: "The Responsibility of Christian Youth in the Second Century of Christianity in Japan", under the leadership of the Rev. Atsumi Tasaká, chairman of the Youth Department of NCC and the Rev. Masami Mizuno, the Department's Secretary.

Two main addresses were given at the meeting. The first was by the Rev. Shuichi Matsumura, Baptist minister, on "The Training of Lay People." Mr. Matsumura currently heads an organization in the Baptist Church for the training of active lay people. He told about this organization and the way it works. The other main address was given on the subject, "Facing Young People Outside the Church with the Gospel" by Mrs. Masako Munakata. This outstanding laywoman is a mediator for the family life courts, a trustee of the Womens' Christian Temperance Union, President of a scale manufacturing company and teacher of English at Joshi Gakuin in Tokyo. She is a member of the United Church of Christ.

The second major portion of the conference was spent in sharing experiences that some of the members had gained overseas. The Rev. Hidetake Yano, pastor of a Lutheran church in Denenchofu, Tokyo, told of what he learned about youth work from his six month stay in the States. The Rev. Newton Thurber, IBC student worker in Kyoto, shared his experiences as a leader in the Student Volunteer Movement in America over a period of years. Miss Kyoko Kubota gave a report on the World Student Christian Federation study conference in Rangoon, Burma last year.

The youth leaders decided to accept the conference theme as the subject for the coming year's activities and to emphasize it during the Youth Week of May 24--31. As part of their activities in opening up the second century they decided to cooperate in every way in the NCC Centennial Celebration to be held this Fall.

NATIONAL CHRISTIAN COUNCIL CONVENTION NEXT MONTH

The annual convention of the National Christian Council will meet at Aoyama Gakuin University on March 10 and 11.

Scheduled for the conference agenda are such items as these:

1. Detailed discussion on plans for the Centennial Celebration,
2. A restudy of the organization of the NCC,
3. The Northern Baptist group will enter the NCC at this meeting, (Nihon Baptist Doomei)
4. The membership of the Japan Christian Council in the East Asia Christian Conference will be decided,
5. New officers and executive committee members will be elected.

Present Leadership of the NCC includes the Rev. Michio Kozaki, President; Bishop Hinsuke Yashiro, Episcopalian leader and the Rev. Chitose Kishi, Lutheran leader as Vice-Presidents; Rev. Kiyoshi Hirai, Executive Secretary. Men for membership on the executive committee will be nominated by the constituent groups of the NCC.

CHRISTIAN DIET MEMBER PASSES

Mr. Katsuo Takenaka, Christian Diet member, died on January 26 at the age of 59. He was a member of the Japan UNESCO committee and of the Cabinet Social Security Council. He was formerly Dean of the Literature Department of Doshisha University, and had also served as secretary of Tokyo City YMCA.

TOKYO PROFESSOR EARNS DOCTOR'S DEGREE

The degree of Doctor of Literature was granted by Kyoto University to the Rev. Mr. Junichi Asano, minister of the Mitake Church in Tokyo. Mr. Asano's dissertation was written on "The Prophets of the Old Testament." At the age of 59, he is recognized as an Old Testament scholar.

FUKUOKA GETS NEW CHRISTIAN BROADCAST

In southern Japan, from the city of Fukuoka, a new Christian radio program will be broadcast beginning in the spring. This will be under the direction of Mr. B.C. Moore, who is director of the Fukuoka Christian Center.

The Reformed Church and the Episcopal Church will cooperate with the United Church in sponsoring this program.

KOREAN CHURCH GROWS IN JAPAN

2,300 Christian Koreans live in Japan, and about 10,000, including inquirers and church school children, attend the Korean churches here. With only 23 pastors for the 52 churches where Korean services are held, Japanese ministers assist in some places to provide leadership. A new church building for Koreans is being constructed in Kyoto.

About 600,000 Koreans are resident in Japan, of whom 400,000 are from North Korea.

TAPE-RECORDINGS FOR THE BLIND

Twenty students from Nihon Joshi Daigaku have offered to assist in making tape-recorded readings for the use of the blind.

This project was initiated by a group of church women, and expanded through help given by Japan Church World Service. The library of tape recordings now contains 120 books.

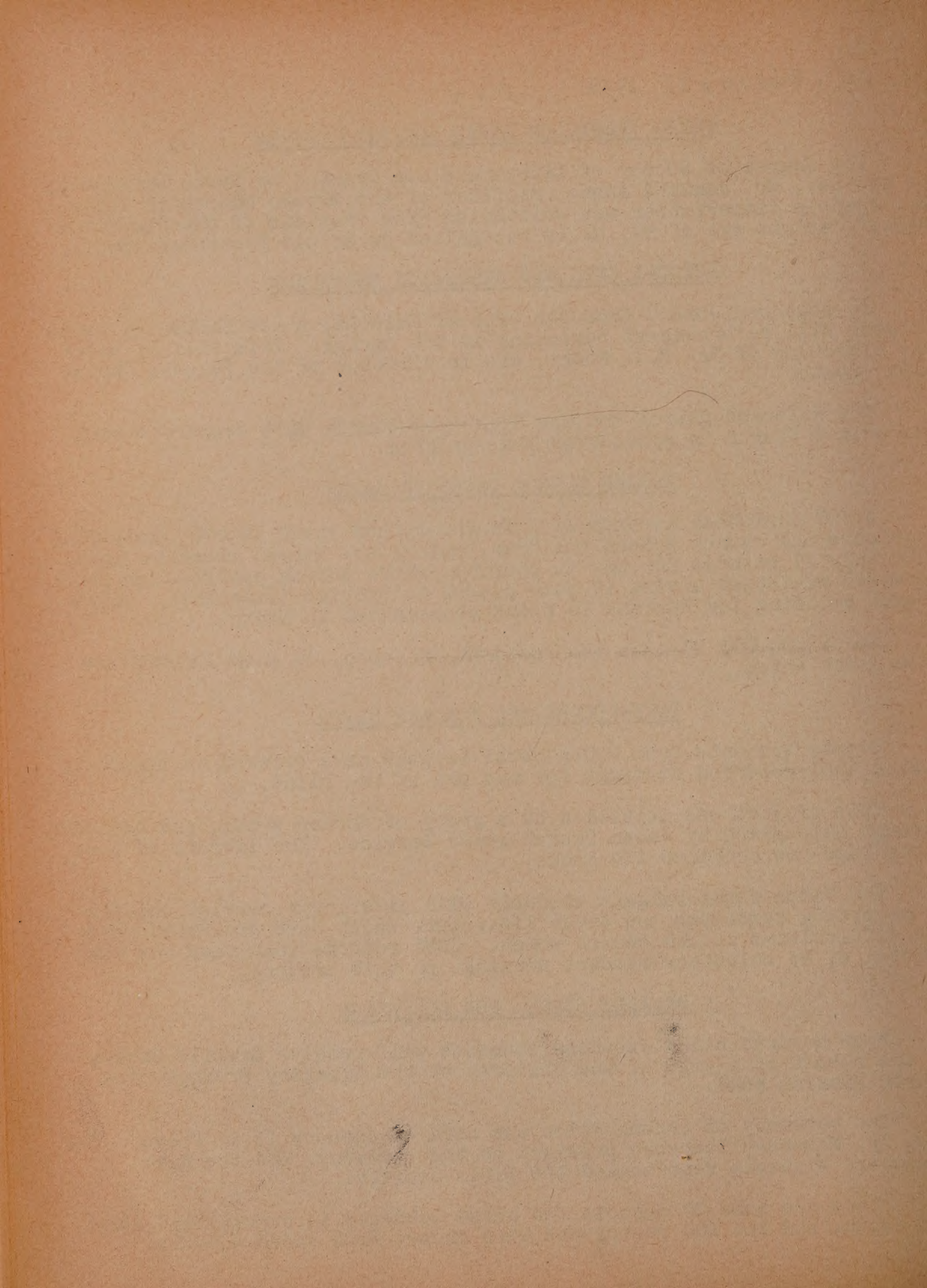
The Nihon Joshi Daigaku students will give their service chiefly to recording textbooks and other literature which have presented reading difficulties to the church women. JCWS reports that they now have a total of 95 volunteer readers working on this project.

BRAILLE BIBLES FOR THE BLIND

Four hundred blind Japanese students will receive Braille Bibles as the result of a gift of the children of the Glengary Presbyterian Church Mission band.

The ceremony of presentation was held on January 15 in Tokyo. The Rev. Mr. Masaharu Tadokoro presided at the ceremony, and the Rev. Tsunetaro Miyakoda represented the Bible Society.

There are some 20 schools for blind students in central and northern Japan, and the 400 recipients were chosen from those schools.



FLETCHER WINS THE SCHWEITZER AWARD

For her writing of the life of Toyohiko Kagawa, Charlie May Fletcher, lecturer at Japan Women's University, was granted the Schweitzer award.

The book, published last October by Dutton, is titled "A Grain of Wheat, the Life of Toyohiko Kagawa". Mrs. Fletcher, wife of the late American poet, John Gould Fletcher, writes under her maiden name, Charlie May Simon.

Mrs. Fletcher came to Japan a year ago last July for the world PEN club convention, and stayed on to teach English literature at Nihon Joshi Daigaku. During that time she interviewed Kagawa frequently, and visited slums in Osaka and Kobe where Kagawa had done much of his work. From this material she wrote a 150 page biography.

The book was selected for the Schweitzer award because of its excellent presentation of Dr. Schweitzer's ideal of love and world peace as found in the life of Kagawa.

Mrs. Fletcher has also written a biography of Schweitzer, based on interviews and observations made during a six-month period when she lived at the Schweitzer mission in Africa. She went to Germany for the presentation of the award, and while there met Bishop Otto Dibelius and received permission to write his biography.

CENTENNIAL VISITORS

Word from the Rev. Munehira Koda of Los Angeles, indicates that already a tour group of 160 is planning to come to Japan for the week of centennial celebrations to be held in November. This includes about 50 from the Chicago area, 50 from Los Angeles, 25 from Seattle and 35 from northern California.

CENTENNIAL EVANGELISM

On January 6--7 at Hirosaki, Ou synod held a conference on evangelism. 170 laymen and ministers attended. The purpose of the conference was to initiate the program of evangelism in connection with the centennial celebration. Full participation in the discussions showed the deep interest of the laymen in the work of the church.

